

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 14 are canceled. Claims 1, 2, 4-13 and 15-19 are pending in this application. The claims have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim Applicants' invention. No new matter is added. The features in the claims as amended were present in the originally filed specification.

Specification Objections to Drawings

Applicants request that the amendment to the specification as set forth above be entered in the record and submit that the specification and drawings have been amended such that the objections to the drawings and the specification have been overcome. For example, applicants have added reference numerals to Fig. 8 and have added reference numeral 17 on Figures 12 and 13 to identify the opposed protuberances 17 on the lock plug 5 set forth in claims 6 and 17. With reference to the objection that the flat portion of claim 12 is not identified, applicants submit that the flat portion of the shaft is shown as reference numeral 120 on Fig. 26 and is described at line 10 on line 2. Accordingly, applicants request that the objections be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. 102 Rejections

The Office Action states on page 2 that claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,220,759 ('759) to Miller. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicants submit that Miller does not teach the feature of amended claim 1 that the shaft has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket. Therefore the spring acts between the shaft and applies a biasing force which urges the shaft to rotate the pawls such that the pawls engage the keeper. The claims as amended state that the shaft itself has a pocket along the shaft in

which a spring is located. In stark contrast, in the Miller reference, the spring 32 is located away from the shaft 18 and is not located in a pocket of the shaft 18. As the cited reference fails to teach at least one feature in the claims as amended, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of the claims.

The Office Action states on page 3 that claims 10, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,718,467 ('467) to Weinerman. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. First as claims 10, 18 and 19 as amended are currently dependent from claim 1, applicants submit that Weinerman does not teach a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket. Further, applicants submit that Weinerman does not teach the feature of claim 10 of a center shaft piece, said center shaft piece having at least one recess at each of two opposite longitudinal ends of said center shaft piece;

a first end shaft piece and second end shaft piece, each of said first and second end shaft pieces having a protuberance at an end thereof, each protuberance being engaged with a respective recess of the center shaft piece,

As the cited reference fails to teach at least one feature in the claims as amended, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections of the claims.

35 U.S.C. 103 Rejections

The Examiner states on page 3 that claims 4 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of U.S. Patent 2,803,956.

With respect to claims 4 and 6, applicants submit that the primary reference Miller fails to teach the feature of amended claim 1 that the shaft has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching in the Womer reference that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the present invention.

Claims 10, 16, 18 and 19 are rejected on page 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Weinerman. Applicants submit that the cited references fail to teach the feature that the shaft has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring is located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching in the Miller or Weinerman reference that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the present invention.

Accordingly, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections.

On page 4 of the Office Action, claim 11 is rejected as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Miller reference as applied to claim 10 above and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,085,928 to Dickinson. Although the Office Action states that claim 11 is unpatentable over the modified Miller reference as applied to claim 10 it is not clear to applicants how the Miller reference is being modified, however applicants respond to the rejection of claim 11 on the basis that the Miller reference is being used for its alleged teaching of the features set forth at the bottom of page 2 in the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejection of claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-9.

In the rejection of claim 11, Dickinson is cited for its alleged teaching of a snap connection between a bezel and a shaft. Accordingly, applicants still submit that the Miller

and Dickinson references do not provide a motivation, suggestion or teaching of a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring located in the pocket.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Miller reference as applied to claim 11 and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,901,501 to Fountaine. It is submitted that the Fountaine reference does not teach what is lacking from the Miller reference with respect to a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching in either reference of that feature.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Miller reference as applied to claim 10 and further in view of the Dickinson reference and in further view of Weinerman. It is submitted that neither the Dickinson reference nor the Weinerman reference teach what is lacking from the Miller reference with respect to a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching of that feature.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Miller reference as applied to claim 14 in the Office Action and further in view of the Womer reference. It is submitted that the Womer reference does not teach what is lacking from the Miller reference with respect to a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching of that feature.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the Miller reference as applied to claim 11 in the Office Action and further in view of the Womer reference. It is submitted that the Womer reference does not teach what is lacking from the Miller reference with

respect to a shaft which has at least one pocket along the shaft and a spring located in the pocket nor is there a motivation, suggestion or teaching of that feature.

CONCLUSION

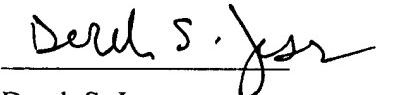
For the reasons set forth above, Applicants' present invention, as recited in the amended claims now more clearly and particularly, is patentable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections in this case is hereby respectfully requested.

If further matters remain in connection with this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned representative to resolve them.

Respectfully submitted,

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